



Agencies Advise Municipal Water for Private Well Users

Cossell/West Vermont Street Ground Water Contamination Site

Speedway, Indiana

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For more information

The EPA, the Marion County Health Department and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management welcome your questions and comments about ground water contamination in the Cossell/Vermont Neighborhood and possible future connections to municipal water. Contact these representatives:

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Residents living in the area of Cossell and West Vermont Street in Speedway who use private wells for their water supply may be affected by ground water contamination. Ground water is an environmental term for underground supply of fresh water. The Environmental Protection Agency along with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the Marion County Health Department are working to determine a long-term solution to the pollution issue. For the 30 homes that use private wells in this neighborhood, the agencies recommend connecting to a municipal water supply. Officials with the EPA hope that work can begin later this year.

During water sampling in 2009 and 2010, the Marion County Health Department detected vinyl chloride above safe levels in the wells of three residences. The safety threshold is called the “action level.” Action levels are established for drinking water contaminants. The pollutant concentration above a certain level will determine the need for an alternate water supply. As a temporary measure the EPA installed systems to treat the water and make it safe for drinking at the three residences. The health department continues to sample residential wells in the area to make sure drinking water levels are safe for other residents.

Vinyl chloride is a man-made chemical used in making a variety of plastic and vinyl products. A ground water plume (an underground mass of contamination) contains vinyl chloride, but the source of the plume has not yet been found. Vinyl chloride is in a family of hazardous chemicals called volatile organic compounds or VOCs. VOCs evaporate easily and can dissolve in water.

In addition, EPA investigated the three residences for an environmental problem called “vapor intrusion.” Vapor intrusion can occur when pollutants carried along by the ground water evaporate and give off dangerous fumes that rise through the soil and seep into cracks and holes in basements and slabs. Once in a building, the vapors can cause hazardous indoor air pollution. Action levels for VOCs were not detected in soil vapor samples collected from under the three homes indicating vapor intrusion was not occurring during the sampling period.

Health concerns


Vinyl chloride can cause cancer if people are exposed to high concentrations of the chemical for long periods, such as in the workplace. Exposure can occur from breathing vinyl chloride in air and drinking water from contaminated wells. The effects of drinking high levels of vinyl chloride for some time are unknown. The effects of drinking low levels of vinyl chloride are unknown, and the EPA is uncertain about the health effects of vinyl chloride exposure from the multiple pathways of drinking, breathing and skin absorption. Given this uncertainty, the EPA has determined that a Maximum Contaminant Level goal of zero in municipal drinking water protects people’s health. More information about vinyl chloride can be found at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts20.pdf>.

Costs for municipal water

Residents will not pay for hook-ups to a municipal water supply. Once connected, residents will receive a water bill each month. For example, the average ratepayer's water bill in Speedway is \$20 per month. See the Speedway website for more information: www.townofspeedway.org/egov/docs/1279370897_228607.pdf.

Next Steps

The EPA has initiated an action memo to hook up properties to municipal water. An action memo serves as a decision document and justifies the need for the EPA to proceed. The EPA has sent out "general notice" letters to potentially responsible parties in the area who may be possible sources of the contamination. These letters outline potential liabilities and financial concerns and also can start plans for reaching an agreement for municipal water hook-up. Residents will be informed of new information and of meetings being scheduled to share updates. In the next few months, the EPA will share more details about connecting homes to municipal water.

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**COSELL/WEST VERMONT STREET GROUND WATER CONTAMINATION SITE:
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